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1913

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Wanted—A Pitcher

CHARACTERS

DOC MARSHALL, *Manager of Hillville Baseball Team.*
JIMMY BRIGGS, *his office boy.*
JACK NORTON, *captain of team.*
SAM MILES, *editor of "Hillville News."*
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BANGS, JR., *an intellectual athlete.*
ISAAC STEINBERG, *a peddler.*
SILAS DEWBERRY, *an exacting parent.*
PADDY O'TOOLE, *a roofer.*
NICHOLAS NAVARONI, *a musician.*
BERT MARKS, *a photographer.*
HANK DEWBERRY, *a star pitcher.*

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Wanted—A Pitcher

SCENE.—Doc Marshall's *real estate office.*

Enter Doc.

Doc. Confound that kid. I told him to come straight back. (*'Phone rings.*) Wonder how long that 'phone has been ringing? (*Takes receiver.*) Hello!.....Yes—this is Marshall.....Oh, the game? Three o'clock sharp, and we're out to win to-day. Dewberry will pitch, of course; come around later and I'll give you the line-up. Good-bye, Sam. (*Enter* Jimmy Briggs, *shuffling feet and reading dime novel.*) Well, Mercury, where have you been? Can't I leave this office at all without you sneaking off for half a day?

Jim. Aw, now, don't get mad, Mr. Marshall; honest I was comin' right back, but Reddy Jones let me take this screamer, and I got interested. It's a corker, Mr. Marshall; all about Injuns, bowie-knives and cowboys. Want to read it?

Doc (*snatching paper*). No, I don't pay you to represent a walking library of Wild West fiction. (*Throws paper in waste-basket.*) There's the place for that trash. Now you get to work for a change and address those envelopes. I'll be back in a couple of minutes. [*Exit.*

Jim. I kin write those envelopes in ten minutes.

(*Rescues novel, seats himself with feet on desk and resumes reading.*)

Enter Jack Norton.

Jack. Where's Doc?

Jim. (*jumping up quickly*). Just gone out, sir. He will be back very soon. (*Recognizes* Jack.) Aw, hello, Jack; I thought you was a customer. Say, lemme feel yer arm. That's a great wing you got. They ain't no one kin put 'em over to first like you kin.

Jack. See here, kid, what are you fishing for now? Got a ticket for the game?

JIM. Betcher life. But say, Jack, just ask the boss to let me off this after'; tell him you need me to watch the bats.

JACK. All right, I'll fix it for you. But where did Doc go? We're in a deuce of a pickle. Hank Dewberry didn't show up for practice, Martin's arm has gone bad, and there's nobody to pitch for us. Doc will have to go and find Hank.

JIM. Gee, that's tough luck. Martin's a softy anyhow; but Hank is all to the merry. Here comes the boss.

(*Begins writing rapidly.*)

Enter DOC.

DOC. That old Mossback is always out. Hello, old sport! Good for a couple of those three-baggers to-day?

JACK. We're up against it, Doc. Martin's arm has gone lame, and Hank Dewberry hasn't shown up for practice. Suppose his father won't let him off while he is haying.

DOC. That's a pretty kettle of fish! That old skinflint would work nights if he wasn't afraid of the dark. Hank does two men's work for him anyway. If he don't show up we are licked; that Valley bunch are loaded with ringers, and Martin wouldn't last an inning. I'll call Hank up and see what the trouble is. Jimmy, call up Mr. Dewberry's.

JIM. (*at 'phone*). Say, Dimples, give me Hank Dewberry's house. You know the number all right, 'cause I saw you and him out ridin' last night.

JACK. That's one way to get out of looking up a number.

DOC. Jimmy is in a class by himself for dodging work.

JIM. Here's Hank, Mr. Marshall.

DOC (*at 'phone*). Hello, Hank. Why weren't you out for practice?.....What's that? Can't come! Why, holy smoke, man, you've got to come; you are the only one that can trim that Valley crowd.....Old man won't let you off, eh? Why in thunder don't he hire somebody? He's got money enough. Hold the line a minute, Hank. (*To* JACK.) See here, Jack, Hank's father won't let him play to-day because he's got a lot of hay to look after and says he can't find a man to help him.

JACK. Maybe we can find a man to send out. See if you can't talk to old Dewberry. Here, let me talk. I'll tell the old Hardscrabble a thing or two if he is there. (*Takes 'phone.*) Hello, old Southpaw, let me talk to that unruly parent of yours a minute.....Oh, he isn't home? Well, we will be licked good and proper if you don't come around, that's all. Good-

bye, Hank. (*To* Doc.) That's a nice hole to be in. I don't know where we can hire a man to send out there for love or money; everybody within ten miles is going to see that game.

JIM. Not *everybody*, Jack.

JACK. See here, Doc, why don't you let the kid go to the game? Remember you were young yourself once, even if no one would ever accuse you of it now; besides, we can use him to look after the bats.

DOC. It would be a steady thing if I gave in to the little beggar once, but I'll give him a chance. We have all got to get busy and dig up a pitcher some place. I'll turn you loose on the job, Jimmy, so now clear out, and if you can find *anybody* that can pitch *anything* from hay to marbles send him along here. Do you understand?

JIM. Betcher life I do, and I'll find somebody that can throw something if it ain't anything more than a bluff. [*Exit.*

JACK. We don't stand a ghost of a chance to win without Hank.

DOC. Well, we won't give him up just yet. (*Enter* SAM MILES.) Hello, here's our local newsmonger. Don't know where we can get a first-class pitcher on short notice, do you, Sam?

SAM. What's wrong now, Doc? I thought you had the only lightning heaver in captivity. "One, two, three strikes; you're out." What's the matter with Hank Dewberry for a slab artist?

JACK. Oh, Hank is all right, only he can't get away from the parental guidance to-day. Got to gather in the new mown from father's broad acres.

SAM. That's a bad break of fortune. Guess you fellows are in for a beating to-day then; I hear you've got to go against a slant slinger that makes 'em smoke. Any other changes in your line-up? (*Produces pad and pencil.*)

DOC. Yes, there's our new shortstop—you haven't seen him yet; he's a queer rooster, but nothing gets by his territory. He is staying up at the Stubbs' place, and when he isn't playing ball he's got his nose in some book. List him as Benjamin Franklin Bangs, Jr.

SAM. He will have to go some to keep up with that illustrious title.

JACK. He's a regular scientific actor, all right. Figures out the bound a ball will take by calculus, measuring the distance from the bat to where it hits the turf; and the hottest grounders

stop dead short against the hypothetical appellations he croons to them.

SAM. Guess you have been associating with him lately.

(*'Phone rings.*)

DOC. Answer that, will you, Jack?

JACK (*at 'phone*). Hello!.....All right, Hank, we'll see what we can do with him. We are looking for a man to send out and do your work, but there isn't a loyal resident in the burg who would miss that game for less than a mortgage on the state.....I'll let you know.....So-long. (*Hangs up receiver.*) It's Hank again. He says his father is in town now, and he wants us to hunt him up and see if we can't make him change his mind and let Hank come.

SAM. It will be easy enough to find the old codger. He will be over at the harness shop playing checkers with Chet Medders.

JACK. Here comes a seeker for a happy home, I guess, Doc.

Enter ISAAC STEINBERG, *with three large pitchers.*

STEIN. Wie geht's, gentlemen? I lookit for a feller what is by name Marshall. You know him, yes?

DOC. I am the interested party; very much at your service.

STEIN. (*setting pitchers on desk*). Might be we could talk business togedder then.

DOC. That suits me. If you are looking for a house to rent, or any kind of a real estate bargain, I'm your man.

STEIN. (*waving hands*). Vait a minute, vait a minute. No, no, you don't understand me yet; I sell goods only. The place where I vas at down at the Valley yesterdays I meets a feller by name Nelson, and he says, "The place to sell those pitchers is up at Hillville; they vill need lots of pitchers up there to-morrow for the ball." I understands; yes, a ball is very thirsty place, what? You need my pitchers for ginger beer maybe.

JACK. That's where Nelson put one over on you, Doc.

SAM. We might get some fun out of this. Have your pitchers any curves, Mr. er ——

STEIN. I am named Isaac Steinberg, which has been by three generations from my great-grandfather who was a rabbi. I sell kettles, pots, pans, plates, rubbers, knives, spices, dress goods, linens, and also crockery, from what you see I have my

pitchers. Sure there is curves to them; Dresden china it is, and so cheap I loses money; for because I have carried them so long by my wagon outside it gets heavy for my horse, so I must sacrifice.

JACK. Sacrifice—that's a first rate quality for a pitcher to possess; none of them can bat much, so they have to sacrifice.

SAM. There must be some out about that curve. A pitcher that hasn't got an out can't be very reliable.

STEIN. Vait a minute, vait a minute! Not reliable! Ten years has a pitcher like that stood on my vash-stand! Do you vant sometings to last forever? Don't fashions change none here?

DOC. So that's your game, is it? You are trying to work something off on us that is out of date.

STEIN. You make it a joke, gentlemen, of a business proposition; the Steinbergs was all business men—I vaste no more time.

(*Reaches for pitchers.*)

JACK. Now you wait a minute; there will be a fellow from the Valley in here after while, and he will need a pitcher sure; just leave that big one and come back later.

STEIN. Maybe I do that, but I hold you responsible for the goods.

JACK. All right, old man, we'll take the chance.

[*Exit* STEIN., *with two pitchers.*

SAM. You ought to get into the newspaper game with that bundle of nerve you carry, my boy.

Enter BENJAMIN FRANKLIN BANGS, JR., *reading book. Bumps into* SAM; *book falls.* SAM *picks it up.*

BANGS. I beseech you to pardon, sir, the momentary aberration resulting in my unavoidable collision with your respected self.

SAM (*returning book*). That is all right, my friend. Bacon's Essays have been responsible for greater shocks than ours.

JACK. Hello, old Socrates, how is the pursuit of the Fourth Dimension to-day? Mr. Miles, shake hands with Mr. Bangs, our new shortstop. You will be saying all sorts of nice things about him when you write up the account of the game for that dinky little yellow journal of yours.

BANGS. It affords me great pleasure to make the acquaint-

ance of a representative of the press; your efforts, Mr. Miles, toward the enlightenment of this somewhat rural community are highly commendable and worthy of encouragement.

Sam. That is about all you can get out of most of these mossbacks around here; they don't seem to realize that a little coin of the realm is a necessary item in running a successful newspaper; but I am much obliged for your endorsement.

Doc (*at desk*). Well, Bangs, old sport, how is your arm to-day?

Bangs. In the finest possible condition. I am gratified to state that the recent lameness, coincident with a slight degree of overexertion, has entirely disappeared, and the biceps, in which portion the strain was most prevalent, is entirely free from any discomfiture whatsoever.

Doc. That sounds like a clean bill of health.

Enter Silas Dewberry.

Dew. Don't want to disturb ye none, Doc, but I kalkerlated I might as well drop in and make sure that boy of mine wa'n't figuring on wastin' his time playin' ball with you fellers to-day.

Jack. I guess you needn't worry, Mr. Dewberry; you told Hank he couldn't play with us to-day and that is enough to hold him at home. It is too bad that you aren't public-spirited enough to let him win the championship for the town.

Dew. Wal, Bub, I don't know as anybody was a-speakin' to you in particular, but it 'pears to me that it ain't no lack of public-speeritedness to stay home and do work that's goin' to put money in your pocket, instid of wastin' time throwin' a ball at somebody and running round a patch of ground with the sod dug off.

Bangs. Pardon me, sir, for interrupting; you are Mr. Dewberry, I believe; my name is Benjamin Franklin Bangs, Jr. I am well acquainted with your son, and hold his friendship in high esteem. It appears to my present understanding that you are laboring under a misapprehension as to the mode of procedure adopted in the pursuit of our national pastime; so much so that a lucid explanation on the part of one thoroughly acquainted with the intricacies of the game might go far toward enlightening your understanding of the subject.

Dew. Gee whiz, Perfessor, you don't belong raound here, do ye? Much obleeged for your offer, but I ain't got no time to waste on such fol-der-rol.

Doc. It isn't your time we are asking for. Hank does two

men's work on that farm, yet you aren't willing to give him a half day off once a week. We can't win the game without him—that's sure.

SAM. Come now, Mr. Dewberry, you should feel proud that your son is able to win glory for his home town by his pitching.

DEW. I don't object to Hank's gettin' all the glory he can stagger under, but glory won't get that hay in the barn, and Hank will.

JACK. If you had been at home helping him yesterday instead of playing checkers all afternoon with Chet Medders, the hay would all be in. I hope Chet beat the socks off you.

DEW. My time is my own to do what I'm a mind to with, youngster. I'll have to admit Chet did have a leetle the best of the argyment yestiddy. (*To* BANGS.) Ye see, young feller, Chet Medders and me is the champeen checker players of this caounty; we've beat 'em all, but we ain't sure which of us is best; sometimes one, sometimes t'other. So Chet says, says he, "We'll play twenty-one games to see who's champeen," and by gum we hev each got ten. I'd give a whole lot to be sure of beatin' that next game.

DOC. We are in a like position, Mr. Dewberry; to-day's ball game will decide the championship between us and the Valley crowd. If you let Hank play we will win sure; if you won't I hope Medders licks you.

BANGS. We are all agreed with Mr. Marshall. Don't you perceive, Mr. Dewberry? It is merely a struggle for supremacy in two different lines of amusement. We are desirous of annexing the baseball championship, while you are anxious to proclaim yourself the victor at checkers. The game of checkers, by the way, offers unlimited scope for contention, even though a careful and scientific study of the subject fails to produce many situations that cannot be offset by skillful manipulation and sufficient concentration on the part of the opposite contestant. I am a thorough enthusiast.

DEW. Say, Bub, I'd jest like to take ye on for a game. Them notions of yourn may be all right, but I kinder kalkerlate I kin beat the eye-teeth aout of ye. Got a board here somewhers, hain't ye, Doc?

BANGS. I am always willing to grasp an opportunity for instruction.

DOC (*reaching under desk*). Oh, yes, we've got all the comforts of home; here you are, Mr. Dewberry.

(DEW. *places board on stand.* BANGS *and* DEW. *take seats.* DOC, JACK *and* SAM *stand looking on.*)

DEW. (*after a few moves*). Bad idee to break your king row so soon, youngster.

BANGS. Sufficient protection is more desirable than over-abundance.

JACK. There don't seem to be much give and take about this.

SAM. You nearly fell for that trap, Mr. Dewberry.

DEW. I pretty nigh forgot abaout that corner man.

DOC. This doesn't look like such a slaughter of the innocents after all.

SAM. That little scheme would have given him a king if you hadn't blocked it, Bangs.

BANGS. I believe it is your move, Mr. Dewberry.

DEW. (*rising*). By cracky, young feller, you're a wonder; ye got me blocked dead; I ain't got a move, and you've got two.

BANGS. Merely an application of scientific principles, Mr. Dewberry.

DEW. Wal, ye beat me fair and square. What'll ye take to show me the moves for that kind of a game?

BANGS. I seldom barter my knowledge of intricate situations, but in this instance I might be persuaded to make an unusual exception; but on one condition.

DEW. By gravy, what's that? I'll meet ye half-way.

BANGS. If you will give your son permission to participate in to-day's contest at baseball, I will elucidate the moves to you alone.

DEW. I'll let Hank play if your game will beat Chet Medders; he knows a lot of 'em, and may know this one. Show me how and I'll try it aout.

DOC. Take the chance anyway, Bangs; it's the only one we've got.

(BANGS *and* DEW. *take board to corner of room.*)

SAM. Great head that lad has on his shoulders!

JACK. He took the wind out of old Dewberry's sails, all right.

DOC. If the old duffer was going to play anybody but Chet Medders, we could fix it up to let him win, but Chet is just as batty over checkers as Dewberry.

SAM. You might as well try to move a paving stone with a toothpick as to try and persuade one of these home-grown rubes to change his mind.

DEW. (*turning front*). Much obleeged, Bub. Naow, I'll jest go across the street and try it aout on Chet.

SAM. I'll go along and referee the contest.

JACK. We might as well go over and see the fun, Doc. Mr. Dewberry is evidently going after that game hard. Come along, too, Bangs?

BANGS. It occurs to me that the interval of time before dressing for the ball game I can dispose of to much better advantage by a further perusal of this subject in which I am so deeply engrossed.

DOC. We will leave you to manage this hive of industry then. I'll be back in a few minutes if Mr. Dewberry does his duty.

(*Exeunt* DEW., SAM, DOC *and* JACK. BANGS *resumes reading.*)

Enter JIM.

JIM. Hello, Mr. Bangs—get the mister? That's out of respect for your learning.

BANGS. Learning is a good thing to respect, my boy. I see you make use of your spare moments, too. At your age a copy of Shakespeare or a volume of Gibbon's "Rome" was my constant companion; to either of which, as the case might be, I referred at any and all times of leisure that presented themselves. Much knowledge may be absorbed in odd moments. May I inquire the title of the edition protruding from your pocket?

JIM. Well, that's—er—say, Mr. Bangs, don't you tell the boss, will you? He took this away from me once, and I ain't finished it yet.

BANGS. I should consider such action on his part exceedingly unwise and wholly uncalled for; young lads of to-day spend little enough of time in good reading. You should be encouraged, not hampered, in your taste for literature. May I glance at the contents?

JIM. Sure thing; you can take it till I get back. Gee, this pitcher is just what I've been looking for! Reddy Jones and me are going to run a lemonade stand at the game to-day. So long, Mr. Bangs; here's the story book.

[*Exit* JIM., *with pitcher.*

BANGS. Now, I wonder what his young mind has been absorbing? Such a bright lad would be content with nothing less than a classic. (*Reads aloud.*) "The Bloody Trail, or, the Capture of Dangerous Dan." Ah, I am disappointed; merely fiction, merely fiction. (*Resumes own book.*)

Enter PADDY O'TOOLE.

PADDY. Begorry, Oi wonder phwat the divvle a job av roofin' there is about this shack? Afternoon, sor. Might it be yourself that's lookin' for some wan to do a pitching job?

BANGS. Not personally, and my present position does not give me authority to reply either negatively or in the affirmative as to your first inquiry; but on my own responsibility, I may inform you that Mr. Marshall is exceedingly desirous of obtaining for the afternoon any person familiar, to the extent of success, with the art of pitching.

PADDY. Oi'm the man thin for the job, Mr. Marshall; that's the name the little shaver towld me about. And where is th' boss?

BANGS. If you will excuse my absence I will inform him of your presence.

PADDY. Thank ye, sor. It's waitin' here Oi'll be till he coomes around. (*Sits down. Exit* BANGS.) Shure and Oi thought there would be a job up this way. A man could stay round th' Valley for weeks and not be airnin' the salt for his porridge. An afternoon's worruk ain't so bad for a starter.

Enter STEIN.

STEIN. Might it be you are the feller maybe from down by the Valleys what wants to see me about a pitcher?

PADDY. Faith, and Oi'm the bye that's right on the job whin there's annything doin' in th' way of pitch or roofin' of anny description.

STEIN. Might we could talk business togedder then? Now, this here thing seems to me for a sample ——

PADDY. Sample, is it? Shure and Oi don't belave in samples mesilf; manny's the toime as foine a lookin' sample as ye iver helt befront yer face is shure to crack on the surface.

STEIN. Vait a minute, vait a minute! Good goods is alvays like der sample when I do business. I have it: a pitcher will wear you for years without a crack; six years I haf had it already.

PADDY. G'wan wid yez. Do ye take me for a doonce entoirely? There ain't no pitch or ever will be that will stand that long widout crackin'.

STEIN. I haf it myself, I tells you; you young fellers what knows everythings is maybe sometimes wrong. I wouldn't use no other kind, understand me?

PADDY. Faith, and Oi want the job bad or Oi'd answer yez back as yez desarve. It's a purty pass whin a poor man lookin' for worruk must take the jibes frim the likes of yez, and him wid the wit he's blessed with.

STEIN. A job, iss it? I haf no job for you. Myself, I sell goods only.

PADDY. Thin why did yez ask me to do a pitching job? Shure and Oi've a mind to poonch yez.

STEIN. Vait a minute, vait a minute! Understand me again. *Pitchers* it iss. Pitchers, I sell them; also kettles, pots, pans, dress goods, linens ——

PADDY. Niver moind yer stock in trade. Oi ain't no tax assessor. Shure and it must be wan of thim little travelin' stores yez have, wid iverything from little tin dippers to wash-bilers, and yersilf for the sign. Phwat's that got to do wid pitch ——

STEIN. Pitchers! I told you before vunce. A feller by name Marshall here, he says a party from the Valley vill vant some pitchers; you say you come from the Valley, so I offer you my pitchers in a businesslike way, but you know nothings about business. Also down at the Valley they tells me this here feller Marshall also needs pitchers, but nobody buys.

PADDY. Aw, Oi get yer dope now; you're after sellin' me a few pitchers;—buckets is more in my line. You ain't the boss around here then? And phwat moight yer pitchers be like? Oi don't see none.

STEIN. Right here I haf it a pitcher—such a bargain you have never seen. (*Looks around for pitcher.*) Where has it gone? That feller Marshall, I hold him responsible! Right avay I go und lock up my wagon, else it also maybe disappear. [*Exit.*

PADDY. Faith, and it looks as if some wan had put up a job on the Sheeney.

Enter DOC *and* JACK.

DOC. Well, sir, what can I do for you?

PADDY. Oi heard yez was lookin' for some wan to do a little

pitching job, sor. Oi ain't no riferences except for that little bit av whitewashing down at the Valley last week.

JACK (*to* DOC). Whitewashed 'em—not a score; that listens good. I heard they had a ringer down there that was a wonder. He must have got sore on Nelson's bunch and come up here with us to get square.

PADDY. Shure and no wan can get a square deal down there.

DOC. You will find us a different kind. Do you put much of anything on your slants?

PADDY. Faith, and it takes no more stuff for a slant than a straightaway; it's all in the way yez puts it on.

JACK. There's something in that, too, but you will have to spread some on this job and do a little mixing; it won't do to put it over all alike.

PADDY. Shure and Oi ain't been in the business six years fer nothin', me bye.

JACK. Guess you won't shove it out too hot for Dutch to handle, though. He never drops anything.

PADDY. All the same, he will be needin' thick gloves.

DOC. You had better take him out to warm up a little, Jack. Here's a couple of mitts and a pill. (*Hands out gloves and ball from desk.*) We can find a suit somewhere if you think he will do. I'll be out in a few minutes and size up his speed.

PADDY. Shure and moight Oi be askin' phwat the blazes yez be talkin' about? Thim gloves is no good wid holes in the backs of 'em, and Oi'm wearin' me overalls.

JACK. We couldn't let you on the diamond in that rig. We fellows have the reputation of being a pretty neat looking bunch on the field, and you will have to live up to it; as for the gloves, you must be used to catching with pillows.

PADDY. Catchin' phwat? Shure and Oi don't be throwin' pitch around in chunks. It goes on hot from me dipper, and lays where it's put.

DOC. Now what are you talking about? You're a pitcher, ain't you?

PADDY. Shure, Oi'm a pitcher. Ain't Oi been tellin' yez Oi kin pitch anny roof in the country, slantin' or flat? Ain't that phwat yez are hiring me for?

JACK. I guess this is another one on us.

DOC. What we want is a baseball pitcher. Do you get that settled under your thatch?

PADDY. And why ain't yez sayin' so in the first place? Where is that amatoor likeness av a college prisidint that tells me yez have got a pitching job, and me a roofer? Ain't it pitchin' roofs Oi bin doin' for years, excipt when Oi have to fall back on whitewashin' for lack of worruk?

DOC. Well, it's nothing more than a misunderstanding on both sides. We were so anxious to land a good pitcher that we didn't watch out for signals.

PADDY. Oi'm beginnin' to think this place is worse than the Valley. First Oi chews the rag wid a Sheeney peddler, thinkin' he's got a roofin' job fer me, only to find he is tryin' to sthick me fer the sale av a water pitcher; then yez raises me hopes av makin' an honest livin', but there's nothin' doin' there. Divvle a bit av luck comes me way.

JACK. Now, that is too bad, but if it is really work you are looking for we can give you something to do. Ever work in a hay-field?

PADDY. It was me cut the hay Maud Muller raked.

JACK. Hooray! Get Hank on the 'phone, Doc, and tell him we have got a man to send out and take his place.

DOC. Better not go too fast; I've got a guess that old Dewberry will want to pass judgment on Hank's substitute.

JACK. I'll take him over and interrupt that checker game long enough to find out.

PADDY. Lead the way to the hay-field, sor.

[*Exeunt* JACK *and* PADDY.

Enter SAM.

SAM. Who is the rookie Jack has got on the string?

DOC. That is another flash in the pan, like Steinberg and his crockery. We thought we had a pitcher, but found out he is a roofer looking for work, so Jack is steering him over to see if old Dewberry won't put him to work in the hay-field and let Hank off. How is the checker game coming along?

SAM. Too slow for me; Chet Medders holds an inquest before every move, so I left.

DOC. Jimmy seems to be sending in the candidates, anyway. Here comes another. I am suspicious by this time, but won't show it. We will get some fun out of our little predicament, if nothing else.

Enter NICHOLAS NAVORONI, *with fiddle.*

NAV. Gooda-day, gentlamen; Meester Marshall, ees it?

Ze boy say you wanta someboda to play for da ball. I am full of da museek. It ees my soul.

Doc. Why, yes, we do want somebody to play. Could we get you to pitch?

Nav. Firsta time I strika da peetch—so! (*Draws bow across strings.*) Nevair miss to strika da peetch.

Doc. Say, my friend, if you could only say that backwards—"never miss to pitch a strike," we wouldn't have to look any further. Do you like to play ball?

Nav. Play for da ball—greata da fun. I wait longa time. First I sella banan; not much lika da job. No museek sella banan. I am full of da museek. Sava da mon and buy grind org; all day maka da museek on da street.

Sam. I guess it's him for the minors too, Doc.

Doc. Evidently not a box artist. Do you think you could play first base?

Nav. I am what you call da expert; mucha time I play da first bass. Ever since I sella da grind org and buy da fiddle—maka much museek. I play any part. Maka da mon to buy barber shop; fiva da chairs, all busy. I own it, so now I have da time to play for da ball. Ah, it ees great to make da museek.

(*Violin solo can be given here if the character is proficient.*)

Doc (*to* Nav.). I guess you will do, all right. (*To* Sam.) I haven't got the heart to throw the harpoon into such a dream of bliss. The boys wanted a dance after the game so we will hire this fellow for to-night. (*To* Nav.) The dance starts at eight o'clock in the town hall. What will you charge us?

Nav. Fiva dollar, I taka da job. Mucha thanks, gentlaman. I am full a da museek. Gooda-day. [*Exit.*

Sam. That's what I call professional talent. Nothing interferes with the main purpose. Why, that Neapolitan Symphony don't know now that you were looking for a baseball pitcher!

Doc. No, our national game doesn't seem to be a universal favorite with these representatives of foreign climes who have called on us to-day. I am afraid we will have to hunt up some product of the sand lots, as the sporting editors put it. (*Enter* Dew.) Well, who won, Mr. Dewberry?

Dew. Game hain't finished yet; Chet had to stop and mend a feller's harness. I'm a leetle bit afeared Chet knows that young feller's game, too.

Doc. You are no good if you let him beat you, that's all

I've got to say. I'm going out and mail this letter. I'll be back pretty soon. [*Exit.*

SAM. See here, Mr. Dewberry, what is the reason you won't let Hank play to-day?

DEW. Consarn ye, I told ye he had to get that hay in.

SAM. Well, I've got some public spirit, if you haven't; the boys can't win without him, that's certain. Now I was brought up on a farm and can load as much hay as the next man. I hate like the deuce to miss that ball game, but I'll go out and do Hank's work if that will suit you, and you let him off.

DEW. Wal, I'll let ye know after the checker game is finished. If I win ye won't need to take Hank's place.

SAM. Oh, you will probably lose. I'll be back here later ready for work in case you do. [*Exit.*

DEW. Naow if them fellers had gone at me just right I might have let Hank play. But I don't kalkerlate on bein' forced into doin' it unless I win at checkers.

Enter DOC.

DOC. Did you hire that Irishman we sent over?

DEW. There was a feller in lookin' for a job, but I wa'n't goin' to be interrupted then, so he said he would come back later.

DOC. Ten to one he won't, so there is another chance gone. Now look here, Dewberry, you have seen me do a pretty good day's work, haven't you?

DEW. You are quite a hustler, Doc, I'll admit.

DOC. I have some regard for this town's baseball reputation if you haven't. Now you call Hank on the 'phone, tell him to come in here ready to play, and I will go out and do his work.

DEW. Better wait till I finish that checker game, Doc; I might win.

DOC. If it takes you as long as it has so far, it will be too late anyway.

DEW. Hank can load a lot of hay; I'll have to think it over, Doc.

DOC. If you lose and don't let me take Hank's place, you will never hear the last of it, I promise you. I'm not taking any more chances, and will be ready for work if needed. Just watch the office till Chet is ready, will you? [*Exit.*

DEW. I reckon Doc could load more than Sam.

Enter BANGS.

BANGS. Ah, Mr. Dewberry, concentrating your mind, I suppose, for the final manœuvers. Your prowess up to the present has been commendable; it is unfortunate that an interruption occurred to disturb your manipulations.

DEW. I kinder thought I hed Chet guessin' for a while.

BANGS. At your present rate of progress, however, the result will be retarded to such an extent that your decision will not enable your son to appear in season for the ball game. Such being the case I deem it advisable to sacrifice my personal attention to the duties of my somewhat subsidiary position, as compared to his, and volunteer my services to perform the labor at which your son is now engaged. If you will kindly direct me, I will proceed to his relief at once.

DEW. Loadin' hay ain't no soft snap, young feller.

BANGS. I have assisted my uncle at the same occupation to a considerable extent the past week, and owing to the strict course of training and conscientious selection of diet which I pursue, I am extremely confident that my muscles will prove subservient to my determination.

DEW. Mebbe so, mebbe so, but I kinder think I'll win from Chet, so you'd better wait a leetle longer.

BANGS. Very well, sir, if your decision is irrevocable, I can only hold myself in readiness to meet the possible emergency, and will return shortly ready for work, if occasion requires.

[*Exit.*

DEW. Field hands seem to be gettin' kinder common raound here.

Enter JACK.

JACK. Look here, Mr. Dewberry, I don't think you are giving us a square deal. We can't wait all afternoon for you to make up your mind whether Hank can play or not. Chet has finished his job, and is waiting for you now.

DEW. Won't take very long for one or t'other of us to win aout then. I'll let ye know pretty soon, Bub.

JACK. I don't think we can wait any longer. You are putting yourself in wrong with the boys, Mr. Dewberry, and it won't help you any if you want to run for tax assessor this fall.

DEW. Reckon I kin run my own campaign, youngster.

JACK. If that haying job is all that is keeping Hank, we can fix that. We'll let Rogers take my place on third base and put our weak man in right field. There won't many hits go out

there with Hank pitching. Then I can go out to the farm and let him come in and pitch the game.

DEW. By cracky, young feller, that's the biggest temptation I've had yit. If it wa'n't for disappointin' Chet I'd go right along naow and boss ye. Reckon ye would have to hustle some then.

JACK. Just the same I'll bet you are not enough of a sport to take me up on my proposition.

DEW. Wal, Bub, ye see Chet would say I was afeared if I went off withaout finishing; but by heck if I lose, it's a go. Naow I'll jest tackle Chet agin. It won't take more'n a few minutes to decide the champeenship.

JACK. Well, hurry things along. (*Exit* DEW.) I don't wonder farmers' sons leave home.

Enter BERT MARKS, *with camera and tripod.*

MARKS. Hello, Jack, are you the silent partner here?

JACK. How are you, Bert? Who is entrusting a likeness of his visage to your tender mercies now?

MARKS. I just dropped in to see Doc on a little matter of business.

JACK. Guess he is over across the street; old Dewberry and Chet Medders are deciding who's who at checkers. I will run over and tell him you are here.

MARKS. All right; much obliged to you. (*Exit* JACK, *at* L. *Enter* BANGS, R., *wearing wide brimmed straw hat, red bandana handkerchief around neck, and carrying pitchfork, which he leans against wall.*) Good-afternoon; you are a stranger in town, I take it.

BANGS. Practically. I am sojourning for a fortnight or so with my maternal uncle, Mr. Stubbs, with whom you are doubtless acquainted.

MARKS. Oh, yes, I know Jim. You must be the new shortstop on the ball team.

BANGS. Your inference is correct. That mode of recreation appeals to me highly.

MARKS. Doc's youthful assistant was telling me his boss wanted a picture.

BANGS. I can readily corroborate his statement.

MARKS. Wish I knew the size of the plate.

BANGS. I believe the regulation size is in vogue. He is also particular regarding the distance to the pitcher's box.

MARKS. That can be easily adjusted according to the light. Picture box! (*Points to camera.*) That's a good one! Here is Doc now.

Enter DOC.

DOC. Hello, Bert; have you met Mr. Bangs, our new short-stop? Ben, shake hands with Mr. Marks, who is responsible for all the facial reproductions around this neck of the woods.

BANGS. Owing to the absence of an interlocutor, so to speak, we simultaneously dispensed with the formality of introductions.

MARKS. Jimmy told me you wanted a picture. Is it for a blonde or a brunette this time, Doc?

DOC (*laughing*). So Jimmy roped you in, too, did he? The truth of the matter is I am looking for a baseball—note carefully—baseball pitcher, slinger, heaver, or whatever you want to call it; but so far nothing but peddlers, roofers, musicians, etc., have appeared, and lastly you. Well, this is a good one.

MARKS. You have got one on me this time, Doc. That must have been the home plate you referred to, Mr. Bangs.

BANGS. A curious coincidence of similar names for different objects.

DOC. Say, Bangs, is that a new training stunt? Protection from the sun, I suppose?

BANGS. I shall explain my somewhat ludicrous adornments later.

Enter SAM, R., JACK, L., *each with pitchfork. They stop and stare at each other.*

MARKS. Hello, boys; emissaries from the hoof and horn chieftain? Better take Doc first.

DOC. Come ahead—I know the answer. Both of you are planning on taking Hank's place in the hay-field; that explains Bangs' decorations also—I hadn't noticed his fork before—and I may state that I am also a candidate for the job.

SAM. It looks as if the old hayseed had us all on the string.

JACK. I have got first call on the job if Chet wins.

DOC. You might as well stack your artillery and wait for the verdict. (*Leans forks against wall.*)

Enter JIM. *and* HANK DEWBERRY *in baseball uniform.*

JACK. Look who's here!

JIM. I brought you a real pitcher, Mr. Marshall.

BANGS (*shaking hands with* HANK). You have greatly relieved the tension of the situation by your appearance, my dear Henry.

SAM. How did you manage to get him here, Jimmy?

JIM. That was easy. I got my maw to invite his maw over to help her work on a quilt. Mrs. Dewberry couldn't come without takin' one of the horses, and Hank couldn't haul hay with one horse.

MARKS. You are wasting your time in the real estate business, Jimmy.

HANK. That let me out all right. Making a collection of pitchforks, Doc?

MARKS. Allow me to speak where modesty forbids elsewhere. These fellows were each ready to go out to the farm and take your place, Hank.

HANK. I am much obliged to you just the same, boys, and if we don't win that ball game this afternoon you can use those forks on me. Have any of you seen Dad?

JIM. He is comin' now.

Enter DEW.

DEW. What ye doin' here, Hank? Got that hay in?

HANK. Mother took one of the horses. She said if you could use the extra one to hold up a hitching-post while you played checkers all afternoon, the hay could wait. I can't haul hay with one horse, so I jumped on my wheel and came in to pitch for the boys.

DEW. Wal, I'm glad ye did, for I was just goin' to send word for ye. Boys, I'm the champeen checker player of this caounty!

ALL. Hooray!

DOC. Good for you, Mr. Dewberry.

SAM. I will give you a first-class press notice.

BANGS. My congratulations, Mr. Dewberry, are as abundant and sincere as if my humble tutoring had not assisted you in the accomplishment of your desires.

DEW. Startin' a hardware store as a side-line, Doc?

DOC. We acknowledge that the joke is on us this time, Mr. Dewberry.

HANK. I'm glad you won out, Dad.

DEW. Wal, you go and win that there ball game, and we'll have two champeens in the Dewberry family. (*All laugh.*)

Enter PADDY.

PADDY. Faith and Oi'm still a-lookin' fer that job.

DEW. What's yer line of trade, neighbor?

PADDY. Oi'm a roofer, sor.

DEW. Come out to my place and I'll put ye to work; my barns need pitching.

PADDY. Oi'll be there wid th' pitch. (*To* Doc.) The roofin' kind, mind ye.

Enter NAV.

NAV. I come to aska da question—where ees it, da town hall?

JIM. That's a cinch—follow the crowd.

Enter STEIN., *with pitcher.*

STEIN. Where vas my pitcher? The feller Marshall I holds responsible. This one I keep by me, understand?

DOC. All right, old man, just bring all you have got over to the town hall; we can use them to-night.

STEIN. Such a business!

DOC. Well, here are all of our recruits. We ought to have a souvenir of this occasion.

JACK. How about a picture? What do you say, Bert?

MARKS. Always at your service.

DOC. We might as well have the whole bunch.

SAM. I've got an idea. Here, Mr. Dewberry, you and Hank each take a pitchfork. Now I'll just borrow your pitcher.

(*Takes pitcher.*)

STEIN. Vait a minute! Vait a minute!

BANGS. It is merely a temporary loan, sir.

(DEW. *and* HANK *form angle by holding up forks with the pitcher hung on tines.*)

MARKS. Now just form a group about the two champions.

JIM. Here's where I fit.

(*Squats on floor between* DEW. *and* HANK. *Others form half circle.*)

PADDY. Faith and Oi'm glad Oi left th' Valley.

STEIN. And my pitchers vas all sold already.

NAV. I will mak fina da museek. I am full of museek.

SAM. Won't this look great on the front page of the *News?*

DEW. Jest say a leetle something abaout the checker champeen, too, Sam.

BANGS. I shall treasure a finished production of this assemblage as one of the most highly cherished of my possessions.

JACK. Hurry things along, Sam; it's most time to dress for the game.

HANK. If I have to hold this pose much longer my arm won't be able to pitch anything but hay.

DOC. And after we get through with that Valley crowd it will be hard work to make them believe that we ever Wanted a Pitcher.

MARKS (*with camera in position on tripod*). Now everybody look pleasant, please, and watch the little bird. One—two—three!

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